

U.S. Serial No. 10/002,576
Reply to Office Action of: 02/06/2004
Family Number: P2001J062

Page 2 of 6

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a pearlite structure from an iron containing article having less than 0.77 wt% carbon comprising the steps of, (a) heating an iron containing article comprising at least 50 wt % iron and in which the amount of carbon contained in the article is less than 0.77 wt% down to 0.0 wt% carbon for a time and at a temperature sufficient to convert at least a portion of said article from a ferritic structure to an austenitic structure, (b) exposing said austenitic structure, for a time sufficient and at a temperature of about 727 to about 900°C, to a carbon supersaturated CO/H₂ environment consisting essentially of CO and 10 to 50 vol.% H₂, and having a carbon activity greater than about 1, to diffuse carbon into said austenitic structure and (c) cooling said iron containing article to form a continuous pearlite structure.

2. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein said iron containing article further comprises silicon, manganese, and mixtures thereof.

3-5 (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein said time sufficient to diffuse carbon into the austenitic structure ranges from about 1 minute to about 50 hours.

7. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 6 wherein said pearlite structure is a continuous layer having said thickness of pearlite is at least about 10 microns.

8-9 (Cancelled)

U.S. Serial No. 10/002,576
Reply to Office Action of: 02/06/2004
Family Number: P2001J062

Page 3 of 6

10. (New) The process of claim 7 wherein the layer is from about 10 microns to about 1000 microns.

11. (New) The process of claim 6 wherein the pearlite structure has a thickness equal to the iron article.